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CAPITOL SPOTLIGHT
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JACKSON'S DEATH A STUNNING LOSS

The death of Senator Henry M. Jackson was a stunning loss for Israel, for the Jews of the Soviet Union, and for all Americans who cherish their fundamental rights. Jackson was the uncommon politician whose lengthy career in public life was guided by a consummate intellect, unimpeachable personal integrity, and above all, an obsession with individual liberty.

For decades, most American leaders were insensitive to the peculiar plight of Soviet Jews. It was widely assumed that official Soviet atheism resulted in discrimination of roughly equal intensity against Christians, Jews, and Muslims in the Soviet Union. Senator Jackson was one of the first major figures in American life to recognize that Jews of the Soviet Union were singled out for systematic oppression far beyond that experience by adherents of other faiths. He swiftly concluded that Jews had little future in the U.S.S.R. He argued that liberty depended on emigration. The Jackson-Mills-Vanik Amendment brought the full force of U.S. trade policy to bear on the predicament of Russian Jews.

Senator Jackson was probably the most effective and forceful friend of Israel in Congress. His support for Israel always demonstrated both a moral commitment to the Jewish homeland, and a superb understanding of the place of the Middle East in world affairs. Israel benefited immeasurably from Jackson's credentials as a foreign policy and defense expert who always saw Israel in the larger context of long-range American interests.

Many have forgotten that it was Senator Henry M. Jackson who alerted the nation to the menace of McCarthyism.

He resigned from McCarthy's notorious Permanent Investigations Subcommittee stating in fury that he would not participate in witch-hunts.

Even though Jackson's home state of Washington was far removed from the civil rights struggle in the South in the 1960s, Jackson set no geographical or political boundaries to his sense of justice.

I have always felt very badly about Scoop Jackson's reputation as a Cold Warrior. True, he and I had different ideas about national

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defense. True, he was inclined to give the benefit of the doubt to Pentagon officials. True, he feared and detested Communism generally, and the Soviet Union in particular. Though these statements are valid, they omit something of fundamental importance: Jackson's motives.

Henry Jackson's hawkishness was not predicated on a Kissinger-type obsession with raw power, spheres of influence and clever Reapolitic. Jackson was searching for the leverage to guarantee peace. He felt a deep moral duty to use American power to prevent Soviet totalitarianism from crushing the hopes and aspirations of defenseless people. Some of these ideas are, in the wake of the war in Vietnam, open to spirited debate. What I believe should not be debated, are the decency of Jackson's motives.

Jackson aspired to the Presidency and made two unsuccessful attempts in 1972 and 1976. The ultimate winners in those years were Nixon and Carter respectively. I believe it can be plausibly argued that Henry Jackson did more for the United States and thw world during those two presidencies than did the two Presidents combined. Certainly, his accumulated accomplishments over his long career equal or surpass those of most Presidents. Though we may see more gifted speakers, or more glamorous personalities, it will be a long time before anyone will come close to matching Senator Henry M. Jackson's solid and lasting achievements.

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